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New York

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is our sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, who passed away on 18 August 2018.

(*spoke in English*)

It is with great sadness that we begin the seventy-third session of our Assembly by acknowledging a great loss — that of Kofi Annan, who will surely be remembered as one of the outstanding leaders of this Organization. But it is also eminently fitting that we remember him on this day — a day fixed by the Assembly 17 years ago, on his watch and with his strong support, as the International Day of Peace, for no one laboured more tirelessly or consistently for the cause of peace than did Kofi Annan.

Kofi Annan was a great Secretary-General because he understood that peace cannot be achieved in isolation. He subscribed fully to the principles set out in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations and knew that they are mutually interdependent. Succeeding generations would not be saved from the scourge of war unless and until human beings can have faith — faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small; unless and until conditions are established under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained; unless and until we succeed in promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

"In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" was, indeed, the title of Kofi Annan's report to the Assembly in 2005 (A/59/2005), in which he asserted that peace and security, development and human rights are the three indispensable and mutually reinforcing pillars of the Organization. Five years earlier, he had submitted his millennium report (A/54/2000), using as its title the very first words of the Charter, "We the peoples". It fell to him to guide us from the twentieth century into the twenty-first, and he knew well that in the twenty-first century the United Nations would have to convince the peoples of the world — not just the Governments — that it was doing something useful for them, something that offered them hope of a better and more rewarding life.

His genius lay in his ability to enlist Member States in a common effort to achieve that end. Perhaps no other Secretary-General could have persuaded the Assembly, not only to mark the year 2000 by convening a summit, but also to commission a report that articulated the aspirations of humankind as it embarked on the new millennium and formed the basis of the Millennium Declaration, including the Millennium Development Goals. Quite rightly, he cited that as his greatest achievement. It was thanks in large part to his influence that those Goals included pledges to ensure that by 2015, girls and boys would have equal access

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to all levels of education and that, by the same date, we would have halted and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria and other major diseases. Such causes were very dear to his heart, and he continued to devote himself to them after leaving office, notably through the work of his foundation, which I hope will continue.

He reminded Member States regularly that empowering women meant empowering whole nations, that there is no tool for development more effective than women's advancement, and that no other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity and promote health or increase the chances of education for the next generations. He often urged the entire international community to remember that promoting gender equality is not only the responsibility of women; it is the responsibility of us all.

Throughout his life, he retained his strong concern, not only for the welfare of refugees and migrants, but also for the greater recognition of the important contribution they could make. He showed great foresight in persuading the late Peter Sutherland to become the first Special Representative on Migration. We owe it to him and to his legacy to do everything we can to finalize and implement the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and the global compact on refugees.

Kofi Annan could be heard around the world without raising his voice, but he could also achieve results in private through quiet diplomacy. Perhaps few of us here today, except the representatives of Nigeria and Cameroon, have ever heard of the Bakassi Peninsula. But we might have learned all too much about it had Kofi Annan not devoted years of discreet diplomacy to working with the Presidents of those two countries to prevent it from becoming a cause of war.

We could search the Charter of the United Nations in vain for any article mandating the Secretary-General to bring together private corporations to discuss ways of improving global public health. Yet, there must be many thousands of people alive today who would not be, had Kofi Annan not brought together the heads of the world's major pharmaceutical companies and persuaded them to make anti-retroviral drugs available in poor countries at affordable prices. That was his style. It is true that he disliked confrontation, but it was a deliberately and carefully considered choice.

He was very clear in speaking up for the purposes and principles of the Organization. But he knew that shouting at people or denouncing individual States or leaders by name would achieve very little, except to diminish his ability to influence them. But he never forgot that a lesser evil is still an evil or that the use of force without the right authority is a danger to us all. At a time when we all feel his loss, let me express my special sympathy to his wife, Nane, who was a tower of strength for him throughout his time in office and since; to their children, Kojo, Ama and Nina, who are also with us today; to the staff of the United Nations who worked with him here and around the world, all of whom must feel a little orphaned today; and, lastly, to the people of Ghana, who were so proud of him and laid him to rest so magnificently last week.

The late Kofi Annan loved the Akan proverbs of Ghana. One such proverb states, "We go to a funeral to mourn the living". As we mourn the loss of Mr. Annan, we are reminded of how much work is left to be done to build the legacy of the former Secretary-General. To live up to his example is a formidable challenge for us all but most of all perhaps for the current holder of the office.

It is therefore with great sympathy, as well as respect, that I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: We are deeply honoured and graced by the presence of Mrs. Nane Annan and members of the Annan family.

The United Nations and Kofi Annan were inseparable. It is impossible to say where one ended and the other began. And so we say to the dear Annan family today not only "welcome", but "welcome home". To so many of us, Kofi Annan was more than just a dear friend. He was family. And I know that representatives in the Hall feel the profound sorrow that accompanies the sudden passing of such a beloved leader, mentor and guide.

Kofi Annan was uncommonly warm, accessible and of the people, but above all he was principled and forceful in battling for the values of the Charter of the United Nations. In recent weeks, so many of his former colleagues have fondly recalled a workplace encounter or an unexpected phone call asking after their well-being or that of their family. He had a knack for assembling solid teams and winning their allegiance by giving them room to do their best. He was charming

and wise, kind and courageous, but he also knew how to deliver a barb in his masterly subtle way. "I wonder if that is the best approach", he would muse. Or perhaps he might say, "I would want to be sure". Sometimes, people were so captivated by his presence that they did not realize they were being admonished.

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Kofi Annan — and not only because I very probably would not be here had he not chosen me 13 years ago to become United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. That was probably his worst mistake.

At the funeral service in Accra last week, Kofi Annan was described as a good and faithful servant. He was indeed good at everything he did across a life of true service. He would be the first to describe any achievement as the product of teamwork. But let me mention just two of the many examples where his individual brilliance shone through. His personal advocacy to mobilize a global response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic led to actions that saved millions of lives. His efforts to articulate the Millennium Development Goals rallied the world behind poverty eradication and paved the way for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, today's ambitious blueprint for a better world.

In a world of impunity and buck-passing, his willingness to own up to setbacks was refreshing — yet another remarkable example. And his moral voice led the world towards ground-breaking understandings on the need to defend our common humanity. Throughout his tenure, Kofi Annan urged us never to be bystanders in life. He summoned us all to act against bias, brutality and bloodshed. He was a multilateralist through and through and a true United Nations-blue believer in a rules-based, global order. I must say, his loss cuts even deeper because we have never needed that faith and inspiration more than we do now.

Kofi Annan called the United Nations the "last best hope of humanity". He burned with the flame of human rights, dignity and justice. We shall miss him every day, but we vow here in the heart of his beloved home that we will carry forward his torch, now and forever. In the exercise of my duties, he will always be my main inspiration and deepest reference.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite members to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Madagascar, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Ms. Razafitrimo (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): "It is ignorance, not knowledge, that makes others say that there are many worlds, when we know that there is one: ours". I wanted to begin my statement on behalf of the Group of African States with those words eloquently spoken by the late Kofi Annan, relating to his vision of the need for a collective and non-exclusive approach to international relations, which has contributed, in particular, to remaking and refocusing Africa's relations with the rest of the world, thereby transforming the continent into a key player in the international system today.

That conviction was what drove and guided that visionary and pioneer of a new Africa, in which he deeply believed. Convinced that Africa's prosperity is essential to world stability, Kofi Annan spared no effort in encouraging and promoting development and poverty-reduction programmes. The world, and especially our continent, remember a figure who was firm in his convictions, cultivated and tenacious, given his innate sense of duty, and who unwaveringly committed himself to the pursuit of equity, justice and peace in the world, especially on the continent.

Happy are those who have been able to fulfil their commitments. Together with the entire world, I firmly believe that the late Kofi Annan fits that description, since from the beginning of his exceptional life trajectory, based on the principles of caring for others and living together in peace and among peoples, he demonstrated the desire to help eliminate poverty and restore peace and security in the world. He worked tirelessly to that end by beginning the process of transforming the Organization to improve its operations, which was a precursor in many ways to the reforms that we have decided to undertake under the leadership of Secretary-General António Guterres this year.

Our feelings and memories of gratefulness have brought us together in this Hall to pay him a stirring tribute, but we are also here to say that we want to build on his legacy and continue the work that he began by making the United Nations relevant to all people through our efforts for peace and development, as embodied in the theme of the seventy-third session of the General

Assembly. Although Africa is unable to console itself over this immense loss, it can, however, take pride in the tributes flowing in from all over the world for one of its sons who earned universal respect. The pain that has gripped us is alleviated by the life lessons imparted to us by this serene strength, who passed peacefully. May the soil of Africa for which he worked so hard be light upon him, and may he rest in peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): Sri Lanka has the honour, as Chair for the month of September, to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States, to join others in paying tribute to the late former Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, and to celebrate his life and legacy. Kofi Annan was a visionary leader who worked tirelessly to make the world a better and more humane place, and he remained a strong advocate for the norms, values and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. For many, Kofi Annan embodied the values of the United Nations, an organization to which he devoted most of his life, first joining the United Nations family as an administrative officer at the World Health Organization in Geneva in 1962 and rising up through the system to become the first Secretary-General elected from the ranks of the United Nations staff.

As Secretary-General, Mr. Annan led the charge to revitalize the Organization and bring it into the new millennium. His first plan for reform, entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), presented to Member States in 1997, continues to be pursued with a renewed focus on improving coherence and coordination. During Mr. Annan's tenure in office, he brought new people into the United Nations to foster a fresh outlook of ideas. He promoted a United Nations whose mission it was to promote peace and act as a beacon of tolerance and solidarity through dark and turbulent times. His work encouraged the world to rethink what the United Nations had become and push the boundaries of what it could become in order to respond to contemporary challenges.

"We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000), Mr. Annan's millennium report, was a clarion call for us, as Member States, to commit to an action plan for addressing crucial issues such as ending inequality and poverty, safeguarding the environment and protecting people from conflict. His report provided the basis for the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), adopted at the Millennium Summit under his leadership. The Summit established a new global partnership amongst States to pursue common, time-bound goals and enabled the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals. That has served as the bedrock foundation that we continued to build on to form the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Annan's call to action to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic led to the establishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. He was also the founder of the Global Compact Initiative to bring corporate social responsibility to the forefront of business. The joint awarding of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize to Mr. Annan and the Organization was a clear recognition of his immense commitment and contribution to the work of the United Nations.

Throughout his life, Mr. Annan stood fearlessly as a voice for peace, human rights and dignity, and he articulated the conscience of humanity in often difficult times. Many have paid tribute to his professionalism, humility, warmth and wit. There are those of us who have been privileged to have worked with him in the United Nations family, or come across him during interactions and discussions. We will remember his towering presence, his wisdom and his soft-spoken style of looking for solutions through diplomacy and dialogue, and we recall the dignified and purposeful way he worked towards shaping a better world for all.

Our thoughts and wishes are with his wife, Madam Annan, the members of his family and all those around the world who have been touched by his charisma, tireless work and compassion.

Wednesday this week marked the twelfth anniversary of Mr. Annan's farewell statement to the General Assembly, during which he expressed his gratitude for having served as Secretary-General during a "remarkable decade" and stated,

> "Together we have pushed some big rocks to the top of the mountain, even if others have slipped from our grasp and rolled back. But this mountain with its bracing winds and global views is the best place on earth to be." (*A/61/PV.10, p. 3*)

Today, we honour his efforts and his unwavering belief in the United Nations ability to help forge

solutions for many of our common problems. In paying tribute to Mr. Annan, let us remain steadfast in our global efforts to work together and face challenges together. Mr. Kofi Annan was a peacemaker whose legacy remains. May his memory and the ideals he stood for continue to inspire people around the world so that we may all work together towards a more just, humane and peaceful world for all.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): Today we come together to pay tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations. On behalf of the members of the Group of Eastern European States, I would like to express our deepest condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Mr. Annan, as well as to the Government and the people of Ghana and the wider United Nations community.

We have lost a true advocate of diplomacy and an inspiring leader who worked tirelessly for a more peaceful and prosperous world. He served as a statesman who brought people together and believed that there is no bridge too broken to rebuild. Through challenging times, his deep compassion and solidarity encouraged people to strive for peace and development.

The profound legacy of Mr. Annan will remain a source of inspiration and creativity for exploring possibilities to pursue a better world through joint actions. As a leader of the United Nations, Mr. Annan was dedicated to serving the needs of people and lifting the voices of individual men and women. In his own words, spoken in Basel, Switzerland, in June 2000, "peace must be built from the bottom up, and begins with every one of us". With his renewed vision for global action, Mr. Annan was devoted to exploring wider opportunities across the United Nations system. He pioneered new ground-breaking initiatives, including the Millennium Development Goals and others, aimed at promoting human rights and combating life-threatening diseases. His achievements throughout his life led to numerous awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize, awarded jointly with the United Nations in 2001.

Mr. Kofi Annan leaves a true mark on history. His lasting legacy will motivate future generations to follow in his path to peace and unity. He will be remembered for his wisdom and courage. In this time of grief, our thoughts and sympathy are with his family, colleagues and the people of Ghana.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bahamas, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Ms. Carey (Bahamas): On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I would like to express our deep condolences on the passing of Mr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr. Annan was the first South-Saharan African to hold the position of Secretary-General. He also had the distinction of being the first Secretary-General to come from the Secretariat. He led the United Nations in a period of transition from the post-Cold War era to the world after 11 September 2001. Called to action by the challenges of his time as Secretary-General, Mr. Annan was a man of values and integrity — a pragmatist who worked tirelessly to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. He always underscored the need to revitalize consensus among Member States on key challenges and priorities, and to convert that consensus into collective and sustainable action.

Mr. Annan was defined as a statesman decades before becoming Head of the Secretariat. He knew and understood the multilateral system and strongly defended multilateralism whenever it was called into question. He used his considerable knowledge and vast experience to reform the internal structures and culture of the United Nations with a view to making the Organization more beneficial to Member States, its partners, its staff and the peoples of the world.

The global challenges we faced during his tenure as Secretary-General compelled him to become a more proactive leader. In that regard, his milestone report, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), embraced the idea that development, security and human rights go hand in hand — a notion that is now at the core of our consensus as an international community. Additionally, Mr. Annan will forever be remembered for his defence of humanitarian intervention and his advocacy of United Nations peacekeeping.

Following his retirement from the United Nations, his passion and advocacy for peace, human rights and good governance were further advanced through the Kofi Annan Foundation, which has contributed to the protection and promotion of peace and development

worldwide. The Latin America and Caribbean Group would like to convey to Mr. Annan's family, his United Nations family and to the Government and the people of Ghana our sincere condolences. His legacy will remain with us forever.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Monaco, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Ms. Picco (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): I am speaking on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

It was with great sadness and emotion that we learned of the passing of His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, the seventh Secretary-General, on 18 August. We express our deepest condolences to his widow Nane and his children Ama, Kojo and Nina. With his passing, the entire United Nations is in mourning. In many respects, he epitomized the United Nations, which he served for more than five decades, first at the World Health Organization and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and then at United Nations Headquarters as Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and as Under-Secretary-General, before being elected Secretary-General on 1 January 1997.

A child of Africa and citizen of the world, Kofi Annan has inspired multiple generations of people who identify with his faith in multilateralism and the indispensable and central role of our Organization. A tireless architect of development and peace, he ushered us into the twenty-first century. The Millennium Summit and the Millennium Development Goals, established under his mandate, enabled us to rethink the way we approach development, development assistance and cooperation. Through his reform efforts, Mr. Annan made the United Nations better equipped to meet the challenges of this new century. On our current path, we must build on his spirit to improve our own work and continue to reform the United Nations.

It was also with Mr. Annan that we mourned the international civil servants whose lives were claimed in the Baghdad attack and the mission personnel who lost their lives in the service of the Organization. Mr. Kofi Annan embodies like no other the idea that "Without progress there is no peace and without peace there is no progress."

The 2001 Nobel Peace Prize awarded jointly to the United Nations and Secretary-General Kofi Annan was the culmination of their exemplary dedication during one of the most unstable periods in modern history. Mr. Annan's actions always served the peoples of the world. He knew that the United Nations could play a central role in freeing people from the dehumanizing condition of poverty, in promoting high-quality education for boys and girls alike, in fighting diseases such as HIV/AIDS, in preserving our planet and its resources, and in containing the scourges of war and violence.

It was Kofi Annan's belief that lasting peace is built through political dialogue and reconciliation. In that context, respect for human rights is a constant commitment that requires us to be constantly vigilant. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations Democracy Fund and the United Nations Human Rights Council were all established during Mr. Annan's second term, all with the same vision of strengthening peace, security, human rights, democracy and development. His belief that it is our collective responsibility to protect the peoples of the world, in particular those that are the most vulnerable, has left a lasting mark and commands our respect and admiration. He undertook the endeavour of a lifetime by establishing the Kofi Annan Foundation at the end of his second term, thereby continuing to devote himself to serving the most vulnerable.

He was also recognized by his peers for his work with The Elders, the group of world leaders of which he was Chair starting in 2013 and through which he responded to humanitarian crises, worked towards reconciliation and promoted peaceful solutions to conflict. The strength and calm he always displayed commanded our respect. Our sadness, therefore, is marked with the recognition reserved for those who serve by humility, who are never satisfied with their accomplishments, and who grow with the challenges they take on. We express our gratitude to this man who took full stock of his responsibilities; this wise man who, through his tolerance and finesse, knew how to appease his interlocutors and build their trust so as to better serve the international community. We express our deepest sympathy to his family, friends, members of his Foundation and his country, Ghana.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United States, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): The United States joins fellow members today in commemorating the life and work of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. On behalf of the United States, I express our deepest condolences to his family and the people of his home country, Ghana. As a child of Africa and the first United Nations official to rise through the ranks to the position of Secretary-General, Mr. Annan inspired generations to strive to leave the world a better place than they found it. We fondly recall that Mr. Annan, a true citizen of the world, spent part of his formative years in the United States as a student at Macalester College in Minnesota, where he encountered harsh winters but also warm midwestern hospitality. Upon graduating in 1961, Mr. Annan embarked on a career advocating for peace and human dignity with the United Nations.

It is no exaggeration to say that Kofi Annan personified the United Nations for millions of people around the world. His lifelong service to the United Nations with the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and his two terms as Secretary-General shaped the course of the Organization and left a lasting impact across the fields of development, human rights, and peace and security. Leading the United Nations during a turbulent period, Mr. Annan helped the United Nations evolve to face new challenges, including through the establishment of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Democracy Fund; the creation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and the adoption of the first-ever United Nations counter-terrorism strategy.

Even after leaving his post as Secretary-General, he embodied the mission of the United Nations, continuing to advance peace and reconciliation through his leadership of the Kofi Annan Foundation and as Chair of The Elders.

On a personal note, I had the great fortune to meet Mr. Annan in Stockholm many years ago at a conference on combating intolerance. It was a brief encounter, but one that made a deep and unforgettable impression on me as a relatively junior diplomat. His warmth, his intellect, his profound decency and quiet, shining dignity, as well as his tireless commitment to working for a better world exemplified for me what all diplomats should aspire to be. The themes that Kofi Annan championed — peace and reconciliation, improving the lives of the least fortunate and recognizing the inherent dignity of every person — remain as urgent today as they were during his time with the United Nations. Today we join the entire United Nations in celebrating his remarkable life and recalling his inspiring legacy.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon: I am honoured to stand before the General Assembly for the first time since I left the United Nations to join in paying tribute to our dear friend and leader of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan.

As a lifelong civil servant, as a devoted family man, as the head of the United Nations during a turbulent decade and as my friend, I have always had tremendous respect and admiration for Kofi Annan. And being back here in New York, I am reminded that the entire world shares my admiration. Indeed, the entire international community was continuously astounded by Kofi Annan's razor-sharp intellect, moved by his guiding compassion and encouraged by his driving idealism. This was just as true for world leaders and diplomats in New York and Geneva as it was for everyday people in Kumasi, Ghana and beyond. As one of those who had the honour to know him, I consider myself extremely fortunate to have personal memories of such an inspiring leader, who gave so much to this world and was a genuine force for global good.

I first met Kofi Annan when I served as Chef de Cabinet to the President of the General Assembly in 2001, and more closely when I served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Korea. His support and kindness helped pave the way for the path I took in following him. As his immediate successor as Secretary-General, I relied on his guidance in ensuring a smooth leadership transition for the Organization.

And after I took the reins as Secretary-General, I humbly called on him again. He accepted the impossible task of mediating the deadlocked Syria talks. He helped to prevent violence in Kenya, saving countless lives, and he served as my trusted adviser. After I concluded my tenure as Secretary-General, I was fortunate again to have the chance to work with him as a member of The Elders, where he served as Chair. In fact, I was proud a year ago to work together with Kofi Annan, all of The Elders, and young leaders from around the world. We worked together to honour those building peace in the

face of conflict, division, and despair, a situation Kofi that cared deeply about.

He was a diplomat, but also a very inspirational leader. And he was always thinking of how he could inspire courageous leadership in others, so that they could go on to overcome the suffering and the wrongs in the world. This is what he continued to do right up until the very end of his brilliant life.

I have struggled to put into words just how much Kofi Annan helped me personally and how well he served humankind. His commitment to peace and conflict resolution, sustainable development, human rights and global education resonated powerfully with all those he encountered, including myself. My tribute can never fully express the feelings in my heart, but I am confident that history will show that Kofi Annan was a monumental leader.

He was modest, yet simultaneously commanding. He was a leader who was deeply rooted in his past yet had an illuminating vision for the collective future. He was a leader who has left us bereaved with his passing, but has provided us with a remarkable legacy that will endure forever and continue to inspire. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, whom Kofi Annan succeeded as Chair of The Elders, said that he always saw Kofi Annan as a wiser and younger brother. I saw Kofi Annan as a wonderful older brother who taught me so much. That reminds me of one of his sayings: "You are never to young to lead, and never too old to learn."

To his wife Nane and his children Kojo, Ama, and Nina, I extend my deepest condolences, as well as to His Excellency President Nana Akufo-Addo and the people of Ghana, who can be very proud of their son Kofi Annan. Today in the General Assembly Hall, we stand together in deep mourning and in heartfelt tribute to a great man, who embodied the universal ideas that we all strive to uphold. May he rest in peace for all eternity.

The President: I now invite Ms. Mary Robinson, representative of The Elders, to give a tribute.

Ms. Robinson (The Elders): I am honoured to speak here today in tribute to Kofi Annan, who, as Secretary-General, was first my boss at the United Nations, and later we were Elders together, joined in July 2007 by Nelson Mandela. When I took up the appointment as High Commissioner for Human Rights in September 1997, my staff in Geneva told me the exciting news that Kofi Annan had put through a United Nations reform package in July 1997 that provided for executive committees on peace, security, humanitarian and development issues, and that the Office of High Commissioner was the only office to be a member of all four executive committees.

When I came to the General Assembly later that September and met my new boss again, I asked what he had in mind in having human rights at the table in all four executive committees. With a lovely smile, Kofi said, "That's for you to work out, Mary". During the five years I served in the post, I knew I had a Secretary-General who was committed to linking peace, development and human rights. Yes, there were times of some tensions. The role of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is to speak truth to power and to represent the first three words of the Charter of the United Nations: "We the peoples". The role of Secretary-General is a more complex, diplomatic one of essentially navigating the way forward through advocacy and persuasion.

During that period, Kofi led the United Nations through some of the most difficult times in its history: Rwanda, Srebrenica, the Gulf War and 9/11. It was a time when the Organization's continued relevance was being openly challenged, as the new millennium dawned. That must have been such a huge professional burden, such a formidable task, with tremendous personal pressure. And yet, Kofi steered the United Nations through that period with assured calmness, grace and dignity. He left the Organization with a sense of purpose, a vision and a mission that it had been struggling to define or defend when he arrived. Kofi's determination re-established the United Nations as a body to defend the poor and the vulnerable, to provide support to those suffering injustice and to be the custodian of equality and human rights.

He lifted the United Nations into the twenty-first century and gave it relevance and immediacy in a world facing new challenges of inequality, injustice and, of course, climate change. None of that would have been possible without his courage, his powers of persuasion, and his optimism for the idea that, when we work together, we can achieve great things. Kofi spent his whole life believing change is possible. He witnessed it in Ghana as a teenager when his home country gained independence, and he saw it time and time again in his 44 year career within the United Nations.

He believed passionately in the United Nations and its role in defending and moving human rights forward.

He always referred to the United Nations as a family. He nurtured it like a family. He stood up for it like a proud father. He cared for its well-being and its future as a loving parent would. After his time at the United Nations he established the Kofi Annan Foundation to continue his work, and we joined the Elders together at its founding in 2007. Kofi saw our role as Elders as an extension of his work on the issues closest to his heart: peace, justice and human rights. He became our Chair, in succession to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and he too had a great sense of humour. When I served as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I rang my husband, Nick, from Kinshasa on one occasion at our home on a lake in the west of Ireland. Nick explained that he was trying to sort out a local row. He said, "Think of me as the Special Envoy of the Small Lakes". When I told Kofi this, he burst out laughing, and ever afterwards he would greet Nick as the Special Envoy of the Small Lakes.

Kofi was working tirelessly right up to the end. I had the honour to join him on an Elders visit to Zimbabwe just before the country's recent elections, on what would become his last public engagement. He was not feeling well, but he had a sense of the importance of a peaceful outcome for the people of Zimbabwe. He pushed himself hard and became ill on the flight back to Switzerland. His death shortly afterwards was a great shock to his beloved wife Nane and their family, to his Foundation, to the Elders, to the United Nations system and to the many, many friends and people he influenced around the world.

As we reflect in the Assembly today on his legacy and the millions of lives he touched, I am reminded of something Kofi would often affirm — that there is no peace without development, no development without peace and neither peace nor development without human rights. He believed that this was what the United Nations existed to achieve, and through his quiet power of persuasion and stubborn optimism it is what he has inspired many of us to dedicate our lives to. I, along with the entire world, will forever be indebted to him for that.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Ms. Tasa Delenda, former member of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

Ms. Delenda: I thank the Assembly enormously for giving me the honour to participate in this memorial service for the late Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Let me begin by expressing my heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Annan, Ama, Kojo, Nina, family and dear friends. The loss of Mr. Annan will be felt by many all over the world. On this occasion, I would like to share with the Assembly the Kofi Annan I worked for and the person I came to know, respect and admire throughout the years.

I joined Mr. Annan's team in 1997, when he became Secretary-General. I was one of his two personal assistants. The other was Wagaye Assebe, who worked with him for over 20 years and who would be in this Hall today instead of me had she not passed away. A few years after he left the United Nations, I joined Mr. Annan in Geneva when he was the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States to Syria. In between, we had been regularly in touch. I am both proud and humbled to have been asked to give a tribute on behalf of his staff.

I would have never thought I would be standing at this rostrum addressing the Assembly. Somehow, I have the feeling that Mr. Annan is looking down at me, smiling, knowing that I am out of my comfort zone, yet proud of me that I am here. Mr. Annan knew the strengths and weaknesses of his staff. In a very subtle way, he encouraged all of us to push ourselves and take on responsibilities and tasks that we might have thought were beyond our capabilities, as I am doing today. I would like to share with the Assembly a few examples of Mr. Annan in action at the office.

It was very rare to have a quiet day at the office. Mr. Annan generated work, even on a day off. Then again, he knew how to reduce stress at the office. Once, a Head of State came to meet him, entering the Secretary-General's office via the official door. When the meeting was over, they came out via the staff office's door. We were all surprised and stood up. After the departure of the Head of State, Mr. Annan came back and said, "Did I surprise you by exiting via your door?" It was a nice way to end a hectic day, laughing.

In another example, it is well known that Mr. Annan used to like walking. On trips, if Mrs. Annan was not there, he would walk alone. For once, that was going to change. One evening, I received a message asking me to inform the staff that in the morning we would all accompany him on his walk. When I conveyed the

message to the staff, I had to repeat it a couple of times. At first, they did not believe me. In the morning, as promised, Mr. Annan approached us and asked us if we were ready. We said that we were ready to go and took off. Little did we know that soon after we would regret our compliance. Even though we were walking as fast as we could, he was always ahead of us. We never caught up with him, especially after he started running up the stairs two steps at a time. He never asked us again.

Of all Mr. Annan's positive traits, perhaps the most important was his thoughtfulness. When he asked us, "How are you?" or "How is the family doing?", he always waited to hear the answer, even if he was pressed for time. He remembered details that were important to each one of us personally — a birthday, a son's graduation, a parent's sickness. He treated us all the same, irrespective of rank. Whenever a dignitary would meet with him and he felt that a member of his staff would have some sort of connection — country of origin, religious affiliation or even a language connection — he would make sure to introduce the staff member to the dignitary. When we looked for guidance, he was generous with his time and counsel.

I can sum up my feelings about Mr. Annan by referring to a conversation I had with CBS anchorman Mike Wallace, who accompanied Mr. Annan on his mission to Iraq in 1998. In a quiet moment, Mr. Wallace asked me, "What is it that makes Mr. Annan so special that everyone appreciates his ways?" I enumerated a number of qualities, and then realized that what made Mr. Annan unique was that they were all embodied in one person.

Mr. Annan was also a caring husband, father and grandfather, always remembering the special days. Upon arriving at the office, he would say, "Today is Ama's birthday. Let us call her", or "Today is Kojo's birthday. Let us call him", or "Please send flowers to Mrs. Annan", and proudly he would add, "Today is our wedding anniversary".

We, the United Nations staff, are very thankful for the opportunity to have known Mr. Annan. It was just a privilege to be so close to such a great man. Our dear Secretary-General will be greatly missed, but even though he is gone, his legacy, his belief in a better future and his vision will continue to live in each and every one of us. May he rest in peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Iqbal Riza, former Under-Secretary-General and Chef de Cabinet.

Mr. Riza: It is a great honour to speak here today at the memorial for former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Allow me to speak at a very personal level and from a very personal perspective.

Kofi Annan was literally my first friend at the United Nations, in 1978. He had joined the United Nations in Geneva 16 years earlier and was a consummate United Nations insider. I had spent 20 years in the Foreign Service of Pakistan in bilateral posts. I joined the United Nations at a junior level as a total outsider.

From our first chance meeting, we bonded. I sensed his special qualities: exceptional intelligence and acumen, an innate courteousness, a quiet self-assurance and a slightly impish sense of humour. Later, other attributes emerged: a deep commitment to the goals of the United Nations, a strikingly wide circle of friends outside the United Nations, a dazzling memory and natural charisma. We started meeting after work; he invited us home, where we first met Ama and Kojo as young children.

Then there was a very special memory for me. While he was with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), I stayed with him in Geneva for a few days. He introduced me to a young lawyer at UNHCR of striking intellect, who was also beautiful and charming. A year or so later, Nane Lagergren and Kofi Annan married. As those present know, she is here with us today with her lovely daughter, Nina, although in this most sad of contexts.

For 15 years, our tasks at the United Nations were on entirely separate tracks. Kofi rose rapidly in the Secretariat management structure. I was involved in political missions abroad, first in Iran and Iraq with Mr. Olof Palme and Mr. Jan Eliasson. I was then sent by Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar to head missions in Nicaragua and El Salvador. While I was away, I knew that I could always phone Kofi at Headquarters for wise advice and support.

Our careers then converged. In 1993, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali designated Kofi as head of the new Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and me as deputy head. With us now working together, our friendship strengthened under the pressure of 16-hour days and only 12-hour days at weekends. We

were supported by a remarkably talented young United Nations staff and close reliable teamwork.

I recall vividly our first meetings in 1993 with the Permanent Representatives of the permanent five — Kofi, a young colleague and myself on one side of a long table; on the other side, the five powerful Ambassadors, with their aides behind them. Their questions were justifiably sharp but some were also openly condescending. The fledgling Under-Secretary-General showed no sign of unease, retaining his composed demeanour. A week later, they were more collegial. In the third week, he received not only cordiality but also open respect.

In 1994, the uncertainty of a second term for Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali was no secret, and Kofi began to be considered a possible successor. Then, unexpectedly, in 1995 he was assigned as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the former Yugoslavia, overseeing the transition of the United Nations Protection Force in Zagreb, in the Balkans, where the Bosnia crisis — it is horrible to recall — was in full sway. He returned to DPKO after the Dayton Agreement on Implementing the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in 1996 I succeeded him as Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the reduced United Nations mission, with its headquarters in Sarajevo. During those two years, we remained in telephone contact not only on DPKO matters but also on the politics for the next Secretary-General. The pattern of voting and parallel vetoes in late 1996 are on record. On Friday, 13 December, at around 7 a.m., Kofi phoned me to say that the Permanent Representative concerned had called to inform him that the veto would be lifted. Of course, I congratulated him. His response was that now I would be his Chef de Cabinet — and that was that.

After the formal appointment by the General Assembly, some close friends gave advice to the new Secretary-General. When one of them remarked that he would have to develop a thick skin in United Nations politics, he laughingly retorted that he knew that the initials "SG" also stood for "scapegoat".

With only two weeks for the transition, we moved quickly. The core DPKO team of Elisabeth Lindenmeyer, the late Wagaye Assebe — one of the gentlest people whom I have ever known — Anastasia Delenda, who has just addressed the Assembly, Shashi Tharoor, Fred Eckhard and Lamin Sise all moved to the 38th floor, soon fortified by Edward Mortimer, enticed from *The Financial Times*, and Nader Mousavizadeh, who was later to co-author Kofi's memoir.

From his first days as Secretary-General, Kofi started to blossom in his gruelling role — the most impossible job in the world. He moved swiftly and surely to bring far-reaching changes at the United Nations. A Senior Management Group of all heads of funds and programmes, including those away from New York, was established. No previous Secretary-General had such a coordination system, which, frankly, mystified us. The first Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Fréchette, who is also present in the Hall today, was appointed and assigned substantive portfolios, such as the reform programme and oversight of the oil-for-food programme. Human rights were assigned a special priority, and a special High Commissioner, Mary Robinson, was appointed. The worldwide campaigns for the Millennium Development Goals and against HIV/AIDS were launched. The United Nations opened its doors to new constituencies, such as academia, foundations and even a link with the private sector, and to further innovative and imaginative measures.

My modus operandi was to take as many decisions on the Secretary-General's behalf as I considered prudent so that our most valuable asset — the Secretary-General's time — could be devoted to complex and sensitive political issues. I stayed at Headquarters whenever he was overseas. The pressures were formidable, and the support of my talented Special Assistant, Fatemeh Ziai, proved indispensable.

We all know that Kofi's first term was crowned by the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001, awarded jointly to the United Nations and to Kofi, personally. I still recall his brilliant speech in Oslo, in which he declared that the world had entered the new millennium through a gate of fire.

Towards the end of his first term, I asked him to appoint a new Chef de Cabinet for his second term, as I was tiring and my two sons were cross with me for not finding time for their children. He insisted that I continue, and we agreed on two years and then later a third, for a total of eight.

Kofi's second term was to bring a sea of troubles, which can be only briefly mentioned here. Beyond their global repercussions, they were to bring about dire lethal consequences for the United Nations. And of course, that includes Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia and so on.

The attacks on major cities of our host country on 11 Sept 2001 justifiably drew massive retaliation, under the self-defence provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, validated ex post facto by the Security Council for the coalition that was formed. Afghanistan, already ravaged by the country's warlords and violent extremism, now also suffered huge bombardments, with heavy civilian casualties. The Secretary-General turned to Lakhdar Brahimi, the undisputed maestro of complex political negotiations. Later, he was asked to take on an equally daunting assignment to Iraq — a reflection of Kofi's high esteem for him.

Iraq, too, suffered lethal consequences, which its regime first brought on itself. We know that Saddam Hussein faced accusations of covertly developing nuclear weapons, and intensive investigations by the United Nations were under way. Here, I should like to offer a personal vignette. When satellite photographs were being displayed in the Security Council as evidence of Iraq's secret efforts (see S/PV.4701), I leaned over and whispered to the Secretary-General about the General who was speaking: "The General is not comfortable with what he is saying — he is following orders".

After the massive attack by the coalition forces on Iraq, the Council decided to deploy the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. Sergio Vieira de Mello was a colleague of extraordinary talents, and Kofi assigned him as his Special Representative. The three of us met in the Secretary-General's residence on a Sunday morning, and Sergio accepted the assignment with some reluctance. None of us can forget the calamity that struck the mission on 19 August 2003, killing Sergio and 21 other courageous and dedicated United Nations colleagues. For Kofi, and for all the United Nations, Sergio was a true hero, and he remains a hero to the entire United Nations family.

Here, I should like to recall that after the Security Council virtually decimated the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda when the genocide erupted in 1994, General Roméo Dallaire refused to abandon the people of Rwanda in their blood-soaked nightmare. He was another United Nations hero.

Beyond containing wars and civil conflicts, the Secretary-General, late in his second term, was confronted by a right-wing campaign in the host country on the oil-for-food imbroglio, bringing him into the political line of fire. Accusations and insinuations flew around. Eventually, the inquiry led by Paul Volcker absolved him, but it left him wounded. Yet he prevailed to complete his second term. Such resilience is a rare quality.

I should like to end with some vignettes. One of my first instructions to our close team when Kofi became Secretary-General was that he would be addressed only as "SG" and no longer as "Kofi". Every few months, I would ask him if his hat size had expanded, and he would assure me that it was still the same.

When a crisis became so aggravating that even Kofi's remarkable composure showed signs of stress, I would remind him that in Nane he had a strong anchor in the storms that confronted him. In his second year as Secretary-General, I remarked to Nane that her husband had become a celebrity. She was scandalized and emphatically denied that. But the fact was that he, and a very reluctant Nane, inevitably became world celebrities and were recognized wherever they went. Once on a street in Italy, a passer-by asked for an autograph, saying "please, Mr. Freeman", and Kofi with a flourish signed "Morgan Freeman".

What will be my memories of Kofi Annan? I will remember him as our Secretary-General; a builder of confidence and bridges between antagonists; a crusader to better the lives of the unfortunate and the deprived, above all refugees; a dedicated defender of human rights everywhere; the epitome of soft power, well-deserving of the sobriquet "the secular Pope"; a close friend; a man of innate and naturally deep kindness, generosity of spirit and ever-ready empathy — characteristics that also define his wife, Nane.

Only on the day after his passing did the reality strike me, and involuntarily a verse from schooldays — a verse from Shakespeare — meandered back into my mind, albeit from a markedly different context. It is from the last lines of *Julius Caesar*, when Brutus, in deep remorse for joining in the assassination of Caesar, takes his own life and is eulogized by Antony. I should like to quote it as an epitaph for Kofi Annan.

> "His life was gentle, and the elements
> So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"

This was a man.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I invite Mrs. Nane Annan, wife of the late Secretary-General, to take the floor.

Mrs. Annan: I express my gratitude for the deeply touching welcome for me and my family here at the United Nations, to which Kofi devoted his life. We will cherish this moment, this day of peace, and it will help sustain us as we move forward.

But we are lucky to have so many memories, or rather imprints. He had a glowing aura of radiant warmth and joy of life that one could literally feel and left its impact on people near and far. It was the impact of someone who cared not only for people individually, but about the need for a fairer, more peaceful world for all of us to inhabit. I have received so many messages about how he touched lives and inspired us to accompany him on the road to a greater good. I know that staff members of the United Nations here and around the world are with us today. I would like to thank them for the dedication and commitment they have always shown him and me.

It is a sad occasion that leads me to be standing here, exactly where he stood to put forth his far-reaching proposals. I remember the day he was elected Secretary-General. I was sitting in the Assembly Hall and saw him walk beautifully and gracefully to the rostrum. I remember the Ambassador introduced him as a son of Africa, blown in on the winds of the Sahara.

The office of Secretary-General is based on persuasive powers, and did he ever use his powers of persuasion to the fullest. His whole being was intent on finding solutions to the challenges at hand, thinking outside the box — the rebel on the thirty-eighth floor. And there was no retirement in retirement. How could there be? There was still so much to do and so many challenges to take on. As Mary Robinson stated just now, his last mission was to South Africa to honour Nelson Mandela's 100th birthday, and then to Zimbabwe, as he was concerned about the elections there.

Although an Elder, he had a very special connection to young people. They felt that he was a kindred spirit who spoke to them from his heart, without pretence and with genuine interest. I also know that today, a group of young, courageous leaders are here from the very close-knit programme at the Kofi Annan Foundation, which brings together young people from around the world to tackle the problem of violent extremists. I thank them.

He died too soon, leaving us heartbroken and bereft, but he lived exactly as he wanted — to the fullest, while packing in many lifetimes in those 80 years. His legacy will live on in his Foundation and in all of us.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Kojo Annan, the son of the late Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Mr. Annan: It is an incredible honour for me to stand here in this awe-inspiring Hall, in front of the Assembly, to pay tribute to my father. This is hallowed ground. It is the only place on the planet where the entire world comes together to address humankind's biggest challenges and harness our greatest opportunities. It is hallowed ground because in many ways it is home. The United Nations was home to my father for the better part of 45 years and has always felt like home to me and my family.

What is home, anyway? I have been reflecting on that question a great deal lately. What is home? Who am I? Where am I from? Where am I going? A father's death has the distinct effect of prompting uncomfortable existential questions. I was born in Geneva to a Ghanaian father and a Nigerian mother. I am also a British citizen and I have lived many years of my life in London, Lagos, Accra and New York. My sister Ama is a United States citizen who has lived in New York, Lagos, Paris and London. My stepmother Nane, daddy's beloved wife for the past 35 years, is Swedish. My sister Nina is Swedish and now, recently, Swiss. Nina's lovely kids are Swedish, Dutch and Swiss. Do not ask me how the World Cup works in their house. My wife is a quarter Nigerian, a quarter Ghanaian, a quarter Indian and a quarter English. It is a mini-United Nations.

As a result, I have always thought of myself as a global citizen. But recently, as I reflected on my father's remarkable life, it struck me that being a global citizen has nothing to do with stamps in a passport, addresses lived at or a One World miles balance. It is a responsibility far greater than the trappings of privilege that my father's career afforded me. I finally understand that being a global citizen is about completely embracing the common humanity of all of the world's citizens. It is about seeing potential in anyone and helping to build a world where anything is possible for that someone. It is literally unfathomable that an obscure young man born in Kumasi, Ghana's second city, 19 years before Ghana's independence, and who had never left the country before he was 18, would rise to one day become the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations. Yet, that was my father's story. It is a story that became his world view. If it was possible for him, why should stability peace, security, justice, sustenance, education, opportunity or success be impossible for anyone else?

I finally understand that being a global citizen is about creating a world where everyone can find home. Home is not where one is from or where one lives. Home is being seen and accepted for who one is; being encouraged, comforted fed and clothed; having a roof over one's head; being loved and supported, and being given access to opportunity.

One of my father's favourite quotes came from Edmund Burke: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." It was more than a quote; it was his code. That is why he always felt at home here, surrounded by and working with the dedicated men and women of the United Nations and the Member States that shared that code. To quote Secretary-General António Guterres, "Kofi Annan was the United Nations and the United Nations was Kofi Annan". I thank the Secretary-General for his wonderful words in Accra. We were deeply moved.

My father's race has ended but the work continues. He believed it was the only work worth doing — creating a world where everyone can find home. He fervently believed in this institution and everyone in it. If my father were here, he would implore the Assembly to continue fighting the good fight to beat back the forces of inequality, disease, injustice and strife. He would implore me to do the same. My father's passing has made it absolutely clear that I need to follow in his footsteps, not as Secretary-General or as a politician, but as a humanitarian, doing my little bit wherever I am and however I can for humankind. We can all do our little bit for a fairer, more peaceful world. We can all make peace personal in honour of daddy.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Annan Cato, Special Representative of the President of the Republic of Ghana.

Mr. Cato (Ghana): I deem it a great honour to address this special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly in honour of the late Kofi Atta Annan and to deliver this statement on the authority and on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana.

May I from the onset express Ghana's sincere thanks to the President of the General Assembly and to the Secretary-General for convening this special commemorative meeting. The Government and the people of Ghana deeply appreciate the expressions of sympathy and tributes that have been paid to the memory of our beloved compatriot, Kofi Annan, since his passing on 18 August. We are touched and comforted by the numerous heart-warming sentiments expressed in the statements made in the course of this morning's commemorative meeting.

I wish to thank Secretary-General António Guterres and the staff of the United Nations, both serving and retired, who travelled to Ghana last week to attend the funeral service for Kofi Annan. Their presence in Ghana and that of a large number of current and former Heads of State and Government, royalty, representatives of international bodies and eminent personalities from many countries was testimony to the high esteem and deep respect that the world held for Kofi Annan, a son of Ghana and of Africa, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, global citizen and Statesman.

In his eulogy during the State funeral for Kofi Annan, the President of Ghana, His Excellency Mr. Nana Akufo-Addo, stated that

> "the epithets 'charming, cosmopolitan, consensus-builder, elegant, eloquent, gentle-mannered, modest, polyglot, proud African, peacemaker, quintessential diplomat' are still inadequate to capture the fullness of the personality of Kofi Annan, one of the truly iconic figures of modern times".

As has been stated repeatedly, Kofi Annan always presented a picture of peace and equanimity behind a quiet human frame. His encounters with people around the globe attested to his commitment to what made for the dignity and solidarity of humankind. He devoted his life's work to making peace where there was conflict, to defending the human rights of the vulnerable and voiceless and to promoting socioeconomic advancement for all.

As the first Secretary-General from sub-Saharan Africa, Kofi Annan brought considerable renown to Ghana and to Africa, evidenced by his conduct and comportment in the global arena, especially at difficult periods in the history of the Organization. He represented a leadership that was infused with great diplomatic skill, commitment to the core values and principles of the United Nations Charter, and devotion to the welfare of humankind. As he himself articulated in a BBC interview earlier this year, for him, leadership was not so much about the individual, as about the attributes required to serve the needs of society and people.

Let me conclude this brief statement by reiterating Ghana's appreciation to all Member States for their expressions of sympathy and solidarity with the family represented here by his widow Nane, his children Ama, Kojo and Nina, and with the Government and the people of Ghana at this time of mourning and loss. We are reminded that human existence is punctuated by significant events that provide opportunity for reflection and solidarity.

This commemorative plenary meeting of the General Assembly has been one such significant event. We have remembered and celebrated the life and achievements of Kofi Annan, a global citizen. It is Ghana's hope that the footprints that Kofi Annan has left behind will serve as a guiding light for future generations. No tribute or memorial to Kofi Annan would be more appropriate or more deserved than the reinforcement of our collective commitment to the urgent work of the United Nations in addressing the challenges of today's world. "We the peoples" was Kofi Annan's mantra.

Let us rededicate ourselves to the Charter of the United Nations and to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and effective peacebuilding. Let us recommit to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of all persons. Let us work together to protect our planet and to advance sustainable development, leaving no one behind.

Kofi Annan lived and worked for these ideals. May Kofi Annan's legacy and vision, which cannot be erased, inspire our individual and collective actions in these efforts, and may his soul rest in peace.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.